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593 encountered of bitter quarrels between siblings, usually over inherited property or property transactions. In some cases this extended to refusal to assist in traditional ways in which the aid even of remote relatives is expected.

604 *Avuncular-nepotic relationships.*—Data on behaviors in this category are inadequately documented. Evidently boys often have close relationships with their uncles. This relationship is evidenced most clearly in the fact that a boy often tells an uncle when he has "stolen" a girl and may take his fiance to live in his uncle's house, while the uncle first breaks the news to the boy's father. In general, boys seem to turn to their uncles in crisis rather than to their fathers. There likewise seem close relations between girls and their aunts and uncles. Cases are known where a niece rather than a child has cared for old people (and in some cases inherited the property). Comfortably situated families with few children may care for a niece from a poor family with many children, feeding the child well and often buying new clothing. In return, the child will help, running errands and doing housework. In at least one case, the niece really took the initiative. Invited to spend the day,

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604 she simply did not go home except to visit. She said, simply, that her aunt fed and clothed her better than her parents and there was less work. The girl's parents fully approved the step; friendly, and possibly affectionate, relations continued.

General behaviors.—All more distant relatives are expected to take part in any "labor." This refers not to ordinary activities, but to such affairs as a wedding, house moving, death, or *mayordomía*. For such affairs each family wishes to have as large a crowd as possible, for prestige values are involved. On such occasions the husband's relatives attend, but only the closer relatives (and the *compadres*) will ordinarily assist actively. The one exception is in a house moving where the husband's male relatives do all the labor. Relatives of the wife also are expected to attend all functions. The males do no labor, but the wife's female relatives assist in the cooking and serving. Attendance at such affairs is expected even of relatives so remote that they are not called by kinship terms. If they cannot come, they must send an adequate excuse (illness or business out of town alone are adequate) and send a small gift such as they would have brought had they attended. Failure to appear would cause bad feeling and refusal to attend "labors" of the offending relative. Roughly speaking, the obligation extends to anyone addressed or referred to as *primo* or *prima* and to any children or parents of such persons. It also extends to all *compadres* and their children.

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Another occasion in which kinship obligations are apparent is when a family returns to the town after a long absence. Then all the relatives and friends come and spend a day with the family (usually at the house of a close relative). There are also many invitations to meals. Augustín said when his family returned to Cherán he ate scarcely a meal at home for several weeks.

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THE COMPADRE SYSTEM

608 Fully as important as kinship in Cherán is the system of *compadrazgo*. Ordinarily this could be translated as simply the godparent system, but at Cherán the relations between parents and godparents are often as important as those between godparents and children and

582 587 584 604 aged 20. The instance is regarded as exceptional and as undesirable. As a rule, the boy discusses his choice with his parents or with one of his uncles. Although no specific data could be secured on the subject, from the facts that boys at this age seem to be shy with their parents and that the bride is usually taken to the house of an uncle, it seems likely that uncles are consulted on matters of marriage more commonly than are the parents. Some stated there is no preference for maternal or paternal uncles in this connection; others said the girl is taken to a paternal uncle or, lacking an uncle, a paternal aunt.

583 522 After a girl is stolen, only on rare occasions does the marriage not follow. Her parents, however much opposed they may be, must always give their consent, for it is very difficult for girls to get married if they have been stolen and then returned home. As Agustín put it, "they have to wait for a sucker" in order to get married. A youth marrying such a girl is the butt of teasing by all his age mates, even by persons who do not even know his name. In the one case known of a young man who married a girl who had previously been stolen by someone else, the youth is subjected to so much teasing that he is virtually a recluse, either staying in his house when home or working by himself in the woods.

583 [606] It is generally felt that the municipal authorities should force a youth to marry a girl after he has stolen her. If they do not, the authorities are always suspected of receiving bribes to overlook the case. Informants best acquainted with customary viewpoints, though, stated that the municipal authorities are not required to act unless the parents of the groom make the first formal visit to the girl's parents. In this case the municipal authorities are expected to force completion of the marriage. In actual fact the municipal authorities bring some pressure to bear on youths if the girl's parents lodge a complaint.

The following accounts of stealing girls give additional light on the procedures. The first account was written by Agustín Rangel.

When I first met the groom it was about 2 p. m. (on a Sunday) at the corner of Damas Gambe's store. We walked around for a while and when we were coming down the highway he told me he was going to steal a